

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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Agricultural Cooperatives

1. The Bulgarian TKZS (Trudovo Kooperativno Zemedelsko Stopanstvo; Labor Cooperative Agrarian Farm) is equivalent to the Soviet "kolkhoz." Following the advent of the Communist regime, farm cooperatives were instituted in all agrarian centers in Bulgaria. Initially, these cooperatives were made up of land confiscated from the large land-holders and from those who had collaborated with the Germans or actively supported the former government. Many farmers voluntarily contributed their land in order to avoid retaliation; later a program was started for cooperative development in which the small land-owners and private farmers were allowed to participate. At first pressure of various kinds, such as threats and cajoling, was exerted on the peasants, but at present no effort is made to persuade the peasants who are still independent to join the cooperatives. The reason for this is that cooperatives are still in an organizational stage and an increase in membership would require better organization and equipment than at present. Taxes levied on the independent peasants are very heavy, however, and makes independence very difficult; at present, 60 percent of the farmland of Bulgaria is cultivated by the cooperatives.
2. Peasants and small independent land-owners who wish to become members of a cooperative are required to submit written applications to the president of the cooperative. After becoming members, they must submit a payment of 5,000 leva (old currency) for each perch of land which they are contributing; this amount may be paid in stock, agricultural equipment, etc. rather than cash. In case a peasant brings animals into the cooperative, he must furnish enough forage to last until the next harvest. If a peasant is unable to furnish the money or the forage, the equivalent value is carried over as a debit to be subtracted from his share of the future profits of the cooperative as divided among the cooperative members. From this moment, the peasant is simply an agricultural hand and works directly under the control of the cooperative.
3. The cooperative members are divided into squads of 10 persons each and brigades of 60 persons each. Each squad is assigned a definite section to cultivate and is

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given proportional amounts of animals and agricultural equipment. In each area, the squads are required to cultivate the section prescribed by the president of the cooperative; it follows, therefore, that the major part of the peasant members of the cooperative do not farm the land which they formerly owned.

4. The work of each individual or each squad is calculated by the president of the cooperative by the "work-day" rather than by the hour; a "work-day" consists of a definite amount of work which is fixed according to a special schedule. This schedule requires an excessive work norm. Informant states, for example, that each type of work carries its own "work-day" requirements, such as:
 - a. Weeding two perches of land planted to corn; or
 - b. Gathering 60 kilograms of cotton.
5. The pay for one "work-day" [redacted] was 270 leva, which is actually only a nominal sum, because this amount was reduced to only 150-200 leva after various deductions were taken out. All cooperatives, moreover, do not pay the same. The minimum payment is 100 leva in less fertile areas and the maximum is 500 leva in the vineyard areas, but no reasons are given the peasants for this difference in the wage scale.
6. The following are established as minimum requirements for a year's work: 180 "work-days" for women and 220 "work-days" for men. These minimums, however, require very long working periods; during the summer months, work is carried on from dawn to sunset. Work is hard and long and the peasants who are not physically strong feel the strain the first year. Members who do not complete their minimum prescribed work receive fines and a proportional reduction in their share of the annual profits of the cooperative. Peasants 16 years of age and older are eligible to join the organization.
7. Before the cooperative can divide the harvest and profits, the following shares must be deducted for the State and for the general expenses of the cooperative:
 - a. A portion of the harvest for the stockpile, valued not upon the amount of the harvest, but in proportion to the area of land cultivated; this measure is fixed during the season and is not lowered even though a harvest may be bad;
 - b. Payment in goods to other units or individuals who have assisted the cooperative, calculated in accordance with the established price of agricultural products as fixed by the State; for example, payment to agricultural machinery repair shops or payment to the building cooperative for repairing or constructing houses or farm buildings;
 - c. Payment of general taxes required by the State from all members, deducted from the profits or property of the members;
 - d. Providing seeds for the coming season; and
 - e. Withholding 10 percent of the entire harvest for the work of improving the land and repairing and constructing living quarters and farm buildings.
8. Each member received the following for each "work-day":
 - a. Two hundred and seventy leva in cash; however, after various deductions, this amounted to only 150-200 leva; and
 - b. A share of the harvest, after the cooperative had satisfied its obligations, divided proportionally among the members independently of the amount of land contributed by each of the members.

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9. Extra compensations were as follows:

- a. Three "work-days" for each perch of land contributed to the cooperative;
- b. Forty grams of butter for each "work-day";
- c. Unknown quantities of agricultural products, such as cheese, salami, etc.; and
- d. Five grams of wool for each "work-day."

Members who did not fulfill the minimum number of "work-days" prescribed for the year were fined and received reductions of 10 to 15 percent in their shares.

10. The accounting of the cooperative is so complicated and complex that it is difficult to determine the true situation of the income and expenses. A member who wants an advance of 2,000 on his annual income must lose at least two days of work in making arrangements. Before paying out this sum, the accountants must make innumerable calculations on the prescribed work, matured credit, debts, and withholding requirements, and only then will the president authorize the advance payment of salary.

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11. Each member is allowed to own a cow, a sheep, and an unlimited number of chickens, for which he has no obligations to the State or the cooperative. The cost of maintaining these animals is covered by his annual share of the agricultural products.
12. The directors and administrative personnel of the cooperative are paid on the basis of an annual "work-day" schedule provided for in the cooperative statutes as follows:
- a. President, 800 "work-days";
 - b. Treasurer, 500 "work-days";
 - c. Accountants, 400 "work-days"; and
 - d. Brigade leaders, 400 "work-days."
13. Deductions for taxes and other purposes are excessive and are approximately as follows:
- a. Ten percent of the gross income for taxes;
 - b. Between 60 and 300 leva per month for Party contributions;
 - c. Sixty leva per year for the Red Cross;
 - d. Twenty leva per month for the "People's Front";
 - e. Twenty leva per month for the Bulgarian-Soviet Association;
 - f. Obligatory subscriptions, to at least one newspaper, which amount to approximately 2,000 leva per year; and
 - g. Irregular, but frequent, deductions for the national loan.
14. The State guarantees each member a living wage; however, it carries out an excessive and inhumane speculation on the prices of agricultural products. The cooperative submits products to the State at very low prices and the State then resells them in the shops and to the peasants at prices 10 to 12 times higher. For example:

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- a. Rice is sold to the State at 50 leva per kilogram and resold at 500 leva; and
 - b. Cotton is sold at 40 leva per kilogram, while a pair of men's cotton shorts costs 500 leva.
15. After the first period in which the propaganda depicted agricultural cooperatives as the answer to all the problems of the peasants, many peasants joined the cooperatives enthusiastically, but the majority of the members now see the falseness of the propaganda and are hopelessly trying to get out. Leaving a TKZS is not impossible, but is very difficult since those who wish to withdraw face infinite sacrifices in regaining their independence and are required to leave the major part of their land, livestock, and equipment with the cooperative.
 16. This slavery and small remuneration embitters the peasants. In 1951, the members of the agricultural cooperative of Razevo-Konare¹ revolted against their leaders, who had, among other things, embezzled produce and money. Approximately 50 of the leaders were killed, and the members later divided the land, animals, and equipment which they had formerly contributed to the cooperative. The police later intervened, but informant did not know the consequences of this action upon the peasants. This example is not an isolated case; in various cooperatives, the discontented members are recovering their own animals and equipment in order to work for themselves.
 17. Peasants who are held to be reactionaries are expelled from the cooperative. The expulsion is decreed by the regional directorate of the cooperative upon the proposal of the president of the cooperative of which the "reactionary" is a member. Those who are expelled do not receive their former property, but instead are given other land which is of a most inferior quality and poorly kept, which causes them to live in squalid misery. For example, Georgi Apostolov Slavkov, formerly the richest peasant of Gradina (N 42-09, E 25-12, formerly Zarsko Selo), Borisovgrad district, a Socialist, contributed 600 perches to the cooperative when it was forming with the hopes that by this means he could become a member in good standing of the newly-created Communist society. Two months later, he was expelled because of being a former land-owner and was consequently held to be a reactionary. Only two cows and 10 perches of very poor land were returned to him, so that he is now almost destitute. By such means, the land-owners who voluntarily joined the cooperatives for the sole purpose of safeguarding their interests during the Communist regime are being stripped of their power.
 18. In 1951, the various agricultural classes which were held on cooperative farms were abolished. At present, there are courses only for tractor operators and brigade chiefs which are given in special agricultural schools.

Independent Farms

19. There are cooperative farms in all the agrarian centers, even the small ones, throughout Bulgaria, but approximately 40 percent of the peasants are still independent. In the village of Gradina which has a population of 5,000, approximately 50 families have retained their independence.
20. The State does not make cooperative membership obligatory. The pressure which was directed against the independent farmers until 1951 was relentless but has been eased in order to permit the cooperatives to maintain a stronger, better organization, since they are still in the process of organizing. The State, however, does place excessive taxes and levies upon the private peasants and requires them to pay in heavier portions of their harvests to the stockpiles. The quotas required by the State cannot always be fulfilled. For example, the following are requirements for private farmers:

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- a. For each perch of land, 110 kilograms of cotton;
 - b. For each perch of land, 900 kilograms of tomatoes; and
 - c. For each cow, 450 kilograms of milk per year.
21. Since these requirements cannot always be met from the harvest, the peasants sometimes resort to purchasing the balance in a clandestine manner to fill their quotas. For example, to fill the cotton quota, a peasant may furnish pillows and mattresses as substitutes. Indemnities for non-fulfillment amount to three or four times the value of the missing products when obtained on the free market, or punishment consists of confiscation of land equal in value to the fine to be paid.
22. The land-holders who still own fairly good amounts of land are given orders as to what they shall grow on their land, as well as their stockpile quotas. In order to save themselves, these farmers request admission to the cooperatives, but they are refused. Later they are forced to give most of their land to the cooperative or have it confiscated and suffer more retaliation. This happened to informant's brother's father-in-law who formerly owned 80 perches of land.

Machine Tractor Stations

23. Cooperatives do not own agricultural equipment, except for farm tools, and borrow the necessary tractors and heavy equipment from the MTS (Mashino Traktorna Stantsiya; Machine Tractor Station) in their district. This machinery is available to both cooperatives and independent peasants. Instead of paying cash for these services, agricultural cooperatives pay in produce at a rate based on government prices.

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Comment:

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Since this village could not be located on the Deutsche Heereskarte 1:100,000 series, it is suggested that this location may be in error, since Malo Konare is located at N 42-11, E 24-26, Golyamo Konare is located at N 42-16, E 24-32, and Kurtovo Konare is located at N 42-05, E 24-30, and Konare probably refers to one of these three cities.

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